

Washington Award for Vocational Excellence (WAVE) Program

A Washington Opportunity Pathway

Impact/Comparison of Governor, House, and Senate 2011-13 Budget Proposals

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Program Purpose

The Washington Award for Vocational Excellence (WAVE) program was created in 1984 to recognize students who demonstrate excellence in workforce training programs. Recipients are recognized not only for technical excellence but leadership and community service. The Workforce Training and Education Coordinating Board (WTECB) is the program administrator.

WAVE recipients gain the knowledge, skills, and abilities to enter into high wage, high skills, and high demand occupations. They become part of Washington's workforce and enhance the state's economic vitality.

Program Highlights

- WAVE is the only state-funded award program that recognizes success within the career and technical training programs.
- WAVE awards often are the determining factor in a student's decision to pursue training and education at the postsecondary level.
- The program recognizes three students from each legislative district—awarding 147 new awards annually.
- Recipients may receive up to two years of scholarship, and must maintain a 3.0 GPA each academic term.
- Awards are indexed to public tuition, and may be used at accredited in-state public or private colleges or universities, or licensed vocational schools.

Effect of proposed cuts

The 2011-13 biennial budget proposals suspend new awards in the Washington Award for Vocational Education (WAVE) Program. Commitments to previously selected students are fulfilled.

The suspension of new awards results in:

- Elimination of 147 new scholarships each year for the 2011, 2012, and possibly 2013 award years (a loss of up to three cohorts of new recipients unable to access scholarship funding).
- A reduction in direct state financial aid in the 2011-13 biennium of:
 - \$1.2 million in the Governor's proposal
 - \$1 million in the House proposal
 - \$959,000 in the Senate proposal
- Higher reliance on student loans and other forms of financial aid, if available, to replace this award in a time of limited resources.
- Possible shift in enrollment patterns to lower cost institutions due to reduced financial assistance.
- Inability of some WAVE recipients to continue their education due to reduced financial assistance.
- WAVE recipients unable to complete their education will prematurely re-enter the workforce. They will face difficulty locating employment in the current economic downturn, as well as reduced income potential during their work lives.

Please note: This brief reflects the impacts associated with the Governor and House budget proposals and the initial Senate budget proposal, as offered by the Chair of the Senate Ways & Means committee. The final budget will not be released until the conference budget is finalized.

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